

### REMARKS

Applicants believe that the changes to the claims, in the light of the Office Action, place the application into condition for allowance. A detailed discussion of the changes presented by this Amendment follows.

The first paragraph of the specification has been amended a second time to reference two additional co-pending reissue continuation applications that were concurrently filed with the subject application on December 3, 2003.

The various claims that were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the cited prior art have either been cancelled or amended to depend on an allowable base claim, thereby rendering moot, the prior art rejections. In particular, rejected claims 11, 15-18, and 30 are now cancelled, while rejected claims 13 and 14 have had their dependencies changed from claims 11 or 12, to claims 12, 19, 24 or 36. These claims are clearly allowable since the claims on which they depend are allowable.

A number of the objected-to claims have been rewritten in independent form, specifically claims 19, 24 and 36, and are thus assumed to be allowable since it is indicated in section 11 of the Office Action that these claims, among others, contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. These changes also render dependent claims 25-29, 31, 32 and 37-39 allowable for the same reasons. In addition, the dependency of claim 22 has been changed to claim 19, and the language in this claim has been changed to maintain consistency with claim 19, while the dependency of claim 23 has been changed to claim 36.

Independent claim 12 remains unchanged. It is stated in the Office Action that claim 12 is objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in

independent form. Applicants note that claim 12 is already an independent claim. It appears that claim 12 is allowable without any amendments.

Finally, claims 33-35 have been amended to overcome the objection that they do not further limit the scope of the claims on which they depend. The changes to the claims clearly render this issue moot.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims are patentable and allowable over the references of record and that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By:                     /wab/                      
William A. Blake  
Reg. No. 30,548

JONES, TULLAR & COOPER, P.C.  
P.O. Box 2266, Eads Station  
Arlington, VA. 22202  
(703) 415-1500  
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